



## COMMUNITY DISCUSSES GENDER NON-CONFORMING IDENTITY

By **Sundari Von Wetzel '25**  
*Reporter*

On Monday, October 10, students and faculty came together to discuss topics regarding gender non-conforming identity: gender expression, religion, intersectionality, and ways in which the School can better support its gender non-conforming students. Since gender norms are a socio-culturally constructed concept, the exact definition of gender non-conforming differs geographically and culturally. Overall, gender non-conforming is a label that applies to those that present or perceive themselves in a way that is not aligned with the cultural

norms assumed for someone of their assigned gender or sex at birth. That means that one does not have to be non-binary or transgender to identify as gender non-conforming. This is the definition of gender identity that was kept in mind during the conversation. At the beginning of the conversation, Dr. Myers, Dean of Equity and Inclusion, educated the community on Two-Spirit identities in recognition of Indigenous Peoples's Day. "Two-Spirit identity within Indigenous communities relates well to our Community Conversation topic of gender non-conforming identity, as Two-Spirit is an umbrella term in the Indigenous community for a

vast array of gender identities within Native American nations," she explained. Dr. Rachel Myers hopes that, as with every conversation, students and faculty alike become "less ignorant about a facet of identity present in our community than they did upon arriving." Dr. Myers added that even those who consider themselves "experts" in this area or identify as gender non-conforming cannot possibly know how everyone under that identifier will respond to the questions posed. "Everyone deserves an opportunity to share if they feel comfortable and desire to do so," she added.

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Dr. Rachel Myers facilitates the Community Conversation in Colony Hall.

Photo by Ramsey Scott '23/The Choate News

## R.I.P. MAX, THE SCIENCE CENTER SNAKE



Graphic by Yujin Kim '23/The Choate News

By **Laya Raj '24**  
*Copy Editor*

Over the past 15 years, thousands of Choate students have walked through the Carl C. Icahn Center for Science. Little did they know that Max, the School's pet snake, was watching from his home in the second-floor display. After living a long, fulfilling life, during which he made it into the hearts of many members of the Choate community, Max passed away this summer.

Max was a corn snake that belonged to the grandson of

former English teacher, Mr. Connie Mathews. The Science department agreed to take Max in when his previous caretaker could no longer look after him. When Max arrived at the Science Center, Science Teacher Mr. Ben Small took on the responsibility of taking care of the Science Department's new member. "Max came to us as a young snake, a little over a year old and about one foot long. When he was full grown he was over four feet long," said Mr. Small.

Many community members formed a bond with Max. "I vis-

ited Max every time I had Chemistry, and he was always there as a little snake friend to me," described Cathy Liu '24. Dr. Selena Gell recalled her own experiences with the pet snake as well as her son's. She shared how she would bring her four-year-old son, Jacob, to come visit Max every now and then and that he was very sad to hear of his death over the summer. "Max had many fans," agreed Mr. John Ford.

Max's presence in the Science Center also served as an educational opportunity for stu-

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## Eco-Friendly CS Vehicles Introduced to Campus

By **Annie Cady '26**  
*Reporter*

From the compostable containers provided at the Tuck Shop to the recycling bins scattered around campus, Choate has taken many steps towards becoming more environmentally friendly over the past decade. Excitingly, the School's purchase of all-electric Community Safety cars is the newest addition to this initiative. These all-electric Community Safety cars, Hyundai Ioniq 5s, are among the first of Choate's growing fleet of environmentally-friendly vehicles. Over the past few years,

Community Safety has been working in accordance with the sustainability mission at Choate. Though hybrid vehicles have been used for many years, Choate decided to make the switch to all-electric this year. Mr. Patrick Durbin, the Chief Financial Officer at Choate, said, "I can tell you that it is [the] Community Safety officers's favorite car to drive — they love it." The new cars have certainly proved to be more sustainable: Mr. John Finelli, Choate's Community Safety Manager, stated, "In an eight-hour shift,

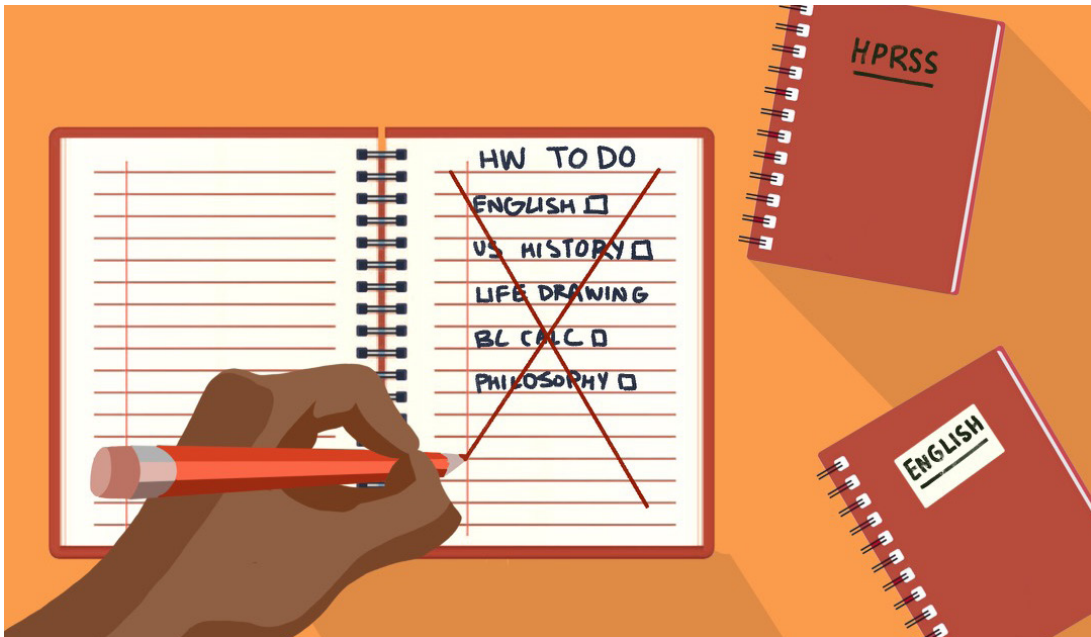
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Photo by Toffy Prakitthipoom '24/The Choate News

All-electric Community Safety cars make their appearance on campus.

## No-Homework Policy Expanded for Religious Holidays



Graphic by Yujin Kim '23/The Choate News

By **Erin Li '24**  
*Copy Editor*

As a non-denominational school that prides itself on the diversity of students' backgrounds, Choate has begun to reform many of its policies in the interest of respecting the many cultural and religious practices of students. According to the administration, new changes were necessary in order to highlight the importance of recognizing that students have different religious practices and require special accommodations to celebrate their culture. One such way of respecting cultural observances was by

introducing a no-homework policy for religious holidays. In the past, Choate's schedule for breaks revolved primarily around traditional Christian holidays, making it difficult for students from other religious backgrounds to celebrate their traditions and observe their religious practices. While students could be excused from classes and extracurricular commitments to observe a holiday, keeping pace with schoolwork still proved to be a challenge for many. Over the course of the year, Director of Spiritual Life Rev. Aaron Rathbun, Dean of Equity and Inclusion Dr. Rachel Myers, and Director of Studies Ms. Ellen Devine

worked together to propose a new policy that grants students the time they need to participate in religious practices. The Spiritual Life Team hopes that students will feel more comfortable expressing their religious needs to the community. Ms. Devine shared, "I hope [the new policy] eases some of the stress and strain experienced by students observing holidays while school is in session, and I also hope that the policy encourages non-observing students to participate in and embrace the many opportunities to learn about different faith traditions."

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## LIBRARY INITIATIVES

By **Nilan Kathir '25**  
*Reporter*

The Andrew Mellon Library is instrumental in giving students the opportunity to appreciate different heritages, cultural history months, and traditional events at Choate. The library has aimed to celebrate different cultures for many years. Yet, as Ms. Courtney Jaser, Instruction and Digital Services Librarian who has been with the library for ten years noted, the library has increased its efforts in recognizing cultures and identities across campus more recently. Behind the scenes, the library's faculty and staff dedicate time to plan such initiatives including coming together to discuss possible displays and events. Dr. Sherry Newman, Director of the Andrew Mellon Library, said, "The Digital Resource Manager holds once-a-month marketing meetings to go over the team effort of planning ahead." The team then works with other faculty members, making use of their input and suggestions to properly curate exhibitions. Currently, the library is celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month and LGBTQ+ History Month by hosting book displays

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## LIBRARY RESOURCES SEEK TO CELEBRATE IDENTITY AND CULTURE



Graphic by Carolyn Chen '25/The Choate News

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that align with these observances. Beyond book displays, the library also offers resource displays of films available through Kanopy, as well as other resources, whether available through websites, podcasts, or other forms of media. Dr. Newman emphasized the main goal of the initiatives as enabling students to gain more cultural awareness. The library has received positive reactions along with valuable feedback from stu-

dents who appreciate the various displays. Sophie Alverdi '25 said, "I think that they do a good job representing Hispanic Latinx culture, but I think that the library, in general, should probably advertise it more because I didn't really hear about it." When asked about what could be improved upon, Alverdi suggested that the library advertise their events more through platforms like School Meeting. Dr. Newman noted that the library appreciated the feedback they recieved. "We do

have a feedback station, and all of our team members engage in conversations with students," she said. Additionally, the library welcomes feedback through email to improve and expand their resources and opportunities.

The library hopes that members of the Choate community will continue to make use of the initiatives, especially students and faculty who have not yet had the chance to explore them.

**Nilan Kathir** may be reached at [nkathir25@choate.edu](mailto:nkathir25@choate.edu)

## Latest Community Conversation Focuses on Gender Non-Conforming Identity

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Jada Dixon '24, a student who spoke during the conversation, shared that "gender non-conforming people have different experiences. They come from different backgrounds, and they look different. I think a common misconception is that you can tell who's nonbinary by the way they look." This misconception of androgyny was noted by several other community members at the conversation, who also described the struggles of being perceived as a gender that may not match the one they identify with.

Dixon noticed that "there's not very many 'out' non-conforming individuals who spoke at the Community Conversation. [It] just speaks to [the fact that] we don't have that many students or faculty that identify that way at Choate," they said. "It isn't really a good or bad thing, but I think it's important to notice there aren't a lot of us."

When speaking to improvements the School could make for its gender-non conforming community members, Dixon noted that "Choate can do bet-

ter at using pronouns properly for all students," particularly faculty who have been part of the School for an extended period of time. They would also hope to see more conversations about gender and gender identity on campus, and more education in general. "People are often afraid or unsure about things they don't really know. I've heard comments about gender identities that aren't true, but it's because someone's just unaware of the fact so they made assumptions. Having conversations like this one will help, overall, people learn."

Ms. Jillian K. Forgue, Associate Dean of Equity and Inclusion, wants the Choate community to learn the basic terminology surrounding gender non-conforming identity along with how to support the community who identifies with it. She echoed Dixon, hoping that the School becomes more cognizant of everyday topics such as pronouns and was able to put on "that lens of being inclusive to all genders and knowing a bit more about what gender non-conforming identity looks like."

While she has not been at the School for long, Ms. Forgue

reported that "after hearing [the Community] Conversation, it sounds like there's more work we can do to make it easier for teachers to see names and pronouns". She added, "This Community Conversation should not be the only time that we talk about these things." She suggested finding more formal opportunities for debrief that include the whole school community.

Ms. Forgue applauded those who shared their voices and experiences in the Community Conversation. She said, "They made their whole community better by their bravery and their willingness to share... The more that people are willing to put themselves out there, the more generative conversation and the more everyone's benefiting. [I am] so delighted and proud ... I hope they feel affirmed and know how immensely grateful we all are for their contributions."

The next Community Conversation on the topic of Male Identity at Choate will take place on December 13.

**Sundari Von Wentzel** may be reached at [svonwentzel25@choate.edu](mailto:svonwentzel25@choate.edu)



Graphic courtesy of the Choate News

## MOURNING MAX

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dents. "I want to have interesting objects and displays in the science center that spark student curiosity and can be used as teaching tools — Max was both of these," stated Mr. Small. Many biology teachers would bring Max into class so that students could feed and hold him.

Every few weeks, Max would tuck into a plate of mice, a sight many students were fascinated by. Because the rodents were bigger than his head, Max had to unhinge his lower jaw to swallow his food. Before learning about Max during her first year at Choate, Dr. Gell was quite surprised when she once opened the anatomy classroom freezer to a pile

of frozen mice, which she later learned was Max's food.

Among the many memories of Max, students and faculty may recall when Max took it upon himself to go on two self-guided excursions. He first embarked on a two-day long trip when his cage was being cleaned. Later, he left for two months by taking advantage of his caretaker's forgetfulness, slithering out of the unlocked cage door. "Corn snakes are known for being escape artists," explained Mr. Small. Although many thought Max wouldn't return from his second escape, he was found "curled up on an office desk near his cage." A few months after his return, an electrician

found snakeskin above the building's ceiling tiles while working, revealing the location of Max's vacation home.

Though some students were intimidated by Max, many students developed a liking towards Max due to his mild demeanor. "It feels different without him," shared Liu. For students and faculty alike, the science building does feel a little emptier without him. "I really enjoyed seeing students interact with Max," said Mr. Small. He is considering getting another pet from a shelter for the department in the future; however, for now, Max's home remains a vacant space.

**Laya Raj** may be reached at [lraj24@choate.edu](mailto:lraj24@choate.edu)

## NEW POLICY RECOGNIZES RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

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Religion is just as much a part of some students' identity as race or gender, making spiritual life an integral component of equity and inclusion. "For people who fall under these traditions, it's a part of our identity that is important to respect, honor, and appreciate. It means to be part of the community — a global, international, cosmopolitan community," said Rev. Rathbun.

While the policy was originally proposed last year by Rev. Rathbun and Dr. Myers, it was too late in the school year to make any changes to the school policy at the time. With the help of Ms. Devine, the policy was officially implemented into the School Handbook at the beginning of this school year.

Through the implementation of this policy, the Administration and Spiritual Life Team ultimately hope to alleviate stress from students balancing religious practices and schoolwork and commitments.

"The homework restrictions around major religious holidays are an attempt to acknowledge the holiday, lessen the amount of work observing students need to make up, and to free those students not observing the holiday to attend and enjoy the wonderful, inclusive

programming put on by our fantastic team in Spiritual Life and all the student groups that collaborate with them," noted Ms. Devine.

Since its implementation, the policy has proved to be a huge success. For example, Rev. Rathbun highlighted the impressive size of the Rosh Hashanah dinner that was hosted by the School to celebrate the holiday earlier this year.

In response to this new policy, the majority of the student body has expressed gratitude, reflecting upon the benefits of the policy. For example, Tav Assaf '24, who celebrates Yom Kippur, a Jewish holiday, used to take the day off from school in order to engage in traditions and practices; however, missing the day of classes also meant he had to stay up late to catch up on work. He shared, "Without the burden of homework, [the new policy] allows me to be with my family more and be more stress-free."

Other students echoed this sentiment. Aria Ramnath '24 who participates in Hindu traditions, shared, "I think it will definitely help me celebrate my faith when Diwali comes around because I won't be having to worry about getting in an essay before the due date while also worrying about religious commitments at the same time, so I now really have time to freely indulge in my culture."

For many religious holidays, the practice to rest and

celebrate, and not participate in schoolwork is important and is in line with the new school policy. Judah Brecher '25, who celebrates Jewish traditions, said, "As someone who has part of that religious background, it definitely was difficult because I'm not going to skip classes, and I don't want to get behind. It's difficult because once sundown happens, you're intentionally not supposed to work."

Although the policy addresses some of the challenges students observing non-Christian religious holidays encounter, members of the community note that improvements can be made. For instance, Brecher shared, "I would like for it to be no school because it puts Jewish students in a difficult position. I had my parents telling me I really should not go to classes and that my siblings who are in other schools aren't going to classes, but it puts me at a difficult place because I don't want to get behind."

As Choate continues to strive to foster a community with equity, diversity, and inclusion, this policy marks a major step towards recognizing and respecting the different religious backgrounds of the school.

**Erin Li** may be reached at [erli24@choate.edu](mailto:erli24@choate.edu)

## NEW COMMUNITY SAFETY VEHICLES



Photo by Toffy Prakitiphoom '24/The Choate News

Community Safety vehicle patrols campus.

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we use just 8-10% of the power. This means these cars can be used for up to six days without a new charge."

The shift towards a more environmentally-friendly community at Choate is visible not only in changes within Community Safety, but also around campus. For instance, the Hyundai Ioniq

5 was not the first electric vehicle on campus. "It started last year with the purchase of two hybrid Chrysler Pacificas to replace two gasoline-powered Suburbans, one of which was dedicated to the Kohler Environmental Center (KEC) shuttle," said Mr. Durbin. The change to these electric vehicles won't stop at the new additions. According to Mr. Durbin, plans to buy an electric

pickup truck this coming year, along with electric golf carts for the grounds and facilities teams are in the works.

The new Community Safety vehicles are an important step for Choate as it continues to move toward all-encompassing green policy on campus.

**Annie Cady** may be reached at [acady26@choate.edu](mailto:acady26@choate.edu)



# Ode to CT’s Largest Agricultural Fair: The Durham Fair

By **Amelia Sipkin ’25**  
*Copy Editor*

On the final Friday of every September, all students in Durham, Connecticut, are given the day off from school to attend the historic Durham Fair. Since 1916, Durham has hosted one of the country’s largest annual agricultural fairs. This year, 162,400 people were in attendance.

Over its 100 years of operation, the fair has grown by 40 acres in size, three days in length, and hundreds of thousands in budget and profit. The first fair charged 25 cents per ticket and attracted 2,000 people. Today, the fair can draw up to 200,000 attendees, each paying \$15 dollars for entry to enjoy over 10,000 agricultural exhibits, carnival rides, fair food, a monster truck rally, and live performances from both local bands and world-renowned celebrities.

This four-day extravaganza is unlike any other fair seen across the U.S. It is 100% volunteer run (this includes the executive team), and while the fair is technically nonprofit, income is an important factor in enabling its operation. Treasurer Mr. Leonard Baginski explained, “We are different from some fairs — the profit is not the motive, but the reality is, we need the money to survive too.”

The fair typically brings in \$400,000-\$500,000 each year and invests a large handful of this revenue toward improving the town and the lives of its people. Profit has been used to make repairs to the Durham Town Hall, renovate the public library, and grant up to \$25,000 each year in academic scholarships. Additionally, there were over 27 nonprofit booths within the fair that served as their own fundraiser. Head of Marketing Ms. Debbie Huscher explained, “This year, Memorial Middle School, which is a fourth-

and fifth-grade school, did a bounce obstacle course ... and they profited \$10,000.”

The organization and execution of such a large-scale event requires a large team of executives and diligent yearlong planning. When asked about the extent of their preparation work, Mr. Baginski responded, “We never stop.” The team holds their executive meeting on the first Wednesday of every month and their directors meeting on the second Wednesday of every month.

In addition to marketing, Ms. Huscher also oversees vendors, entertainment, and public relations for the fair. She explained that this year’s budget was very limited, around \$50,000, which is 30% less than previous years.

For the most part, the fair itself produces the income needed to keep it up and running; however, the committee rents out their properties to raise additional funds. “We are pretty low on donations,” Mr. Baginski explained. “Our buildings are used in the winter to store boats and RV’s and some classic cars. We also own some rental property, three houses, and a store building on Main Street.”

Since 1916, there have been only five years when the fair did not run: in 1938 due to a hurricane, 1942-1944 during World War II, and in 2020 due to the pandemic. Contrary to popular opinion, Covid-19 greatly benefited the fair financially. “Our financial [situation] was positive because we had the income from winter properties, and no fair to pay for ... It left us pretty neat,” said Mr. Baginski.

According to Head of Student Activities Ms. Alex Long, shuttles to the Durham Fair have been provided for Choate students since 2008. In previous years, more students could be shuttled;

however, due to a lack of chaperones available, this year allowed for fewer than normal. “We had 45 students sign up with 75 students on the waitlist,” Ms. Long explained. 2022 was the first year that Choate’s Student Activities Office sponsored free tickets. “We feel that if the SAC (Student Activities Center) is sponsoring a trip, it should be free,” she said.

The bulk of students enjoyed the food and the rides the most. Cider doughnuts, doughboys, slushies, fries, and mini chocolate chip cookies were among the favorites. Yet, most students shared two common frustrations with the fair: long lines and high prices.

Jeremiah Olubowale ’25’s main criticism concerned the extensive and unmoving lines for the various rides. “If you actually waited in line, you wouldn’t get to go on the ride because a lot of people were cutting, so the only way to get on the rides in a timely manner was to cut,” he explained.

Students also criticized the large sum of money that the fair elicited from its attendees. “It was very, very expensive,” said Olubowale. Choate paid for the \$15 entrance fee, but the rides, games, and food all required additional payments. Zoe Dieringer ’25 felt that the students were getting “scammed out of your money,” and although she “still thoroughly enjoys them [fairs],” they are designed to bring in revenue.

Though it may be a bit pricey and slightly overcrowded, the fair continues to excite the community and foster connections and great fun. Candace Beverly ’25 highlighted how special the fair felt for her because it marked a return to normalcy after years of hardships. “For me? Durham fair: 10 out of 10.”

**Amelia Sipkin** may be reached at [asipkin25@choate.edu](mailto:asipkin25@choate.edu)



Photo by Cassatt Boatwright '24/The Choate News

The Durham Fair offers a variety of activities and rides such as its flagship ferris wheel.



Photo by Lauren Kee '24/The Choate News

From hot dogs to cider doughnuts, students enjoy the diverse range of tasty foods at the fair.

# FIRST CLASH OF THE CT GOVERNOR-HOPEFULS

By **Calvin Moon ’24**  
*Reporter*

The upcoming 2022 Connecticut gubernatorial election will take place on November 8, 2022, with incumbent Democratic Governor Ned Lamont running for re-election against Republican challenger Bob Stefanowski and Independent challenger Rob Hotaling.

The first clash between the candidates occurred on September 26, as the three men gathered for a debate streamed by National Broadcasting Company (NBC) Connecticut; the debate was moderated by NBC Connecticut’s Mike Hydeck and Telemundo Nueva Inglaterra’s Grace Gomez. Issues discussed by the candidates included abortion rights, the state budget, and policing.

“I’m going to protect a woman’s right to choose. The law is not going to change as long as I am governor. Period. End of story,” declared Stefanowski, reiter-

ating Roe v. Wade’s codification in Connecticut law.

“Actions speak louder than words, Bob,” challenged Lamont, pointing out Stefanowski’s support and donations to Republican Senate candidate Leora Levy, who favors restricting abortion access. In response, Stefanowski highlighted that Lamont had donated to former Montana Governor Steve Bullock, a supporter of the Second Amendment, and asserted the distinction between donating money and agreeing with all of a candidate’s positions.

Regarding the Connecticut government’s budget, Stefanowski attacked Lamont, saying, “It’s unconscionable that we’re sitting on \$6 billion when people are out there right now only filling half of their oil tank.” Earlier this month, Stefanowski had unveiled a \$2 billion tax relief plan, including recurring tax cuts worth roughly \$700 million per year, that would require ei-

ther deep service cuts or scaling back of the savings program to ensure budget stability and reduce Connecticut’s \$40 billion long-term pension debt.

Lamont, on the other hand, reminded voters of how quickly Connecticut had rebounded from a string of budget crises and tax increases to three years of surpluses, allowing for \$660 million of tax relief in 2022, full budget reserves, and unprecedented payments on the state’s unfunded pension liability. Lamont defended his position by stating, “This is the exact wrong time to be playing games with how we’re saving our money — to make sure when there’s a recession, we do not have to raise taxes, we do not have to cut education spending.”

Hotaling was divided, agreeing to an extent on paying down pension debts but adding that the budget surplus should be mainly invested in technology and infrastructure.

Regarding concerns about crime, Lamont defended his previous term, arguing that he had been expanding State Police training classes and provided statistics of declining crime rates during the pandemic. “Crime ... it’s my number one responsibility.”

Stefanowski struck back, noting the vote of no confidence Lamont had received from State Police during the General Assembly’s transparency and accountability legislation in September 2020. He also argued that the crime statistics do not accurately reflect crime in Connecticut, a state that routinely ranks among the safest in America based on the FBI’s annual Uniform Crime Reports.

Statistics have shown that crime was down 3% in 2021, but the decrease was limited to only certain locations while remaining stagnant in cities such as Hartford, Bridgeport, and New Haven. Stefanowski claimed this to be false, suggesting instead that fears of personal liability discourage police from engaging in high-speed chases, leading to reduced crime rates. “We’re going to support police forces. We’re going to bring back qualified immunity, we’re gonna pay officers more, and we’re gonna keep people safe on the streets and in their homes,” he said.

Hotaling, on the other hand, dissociated from the argumentative tones of his competitors and focused on solutions such as “more community trust building ... invest in technology to make their lives safer ... if the job is harder in the urban environment ... maybe more pay.”

Another topic on which all governors had different solutions was the installation of tolls on Connecticut state roads to help pay for infrastructure and transportation improvements. “We’re already the second-highest taxed [state] in the nation. If

Lamont gets re-elected, we’ll be number one for sure,” claimed Stefanowski. He argued that a toll is still a tax and proposed an alternate solution of incorporating private sectors.

On the other hand, Lamont pushed for the installation of tolls during his first term and reminded Stefanowski that the Connecticut government had a massive deficit at the start of his term in 2019. He stated that Stefanowski’s attempts to eliminate all the transportation revenues, such as free bus service, would jeopardize the economic stability in Connecticut he had achieved. Hotaling, based on a 2019 fiscal stability report, was in favor of some tolls such as entry-exit toll points. He claimed that it was unfair “New York and Massachusetts just drive through Connecticut, and it’s 40% of our traffic on a free ride,” and yet Connecticut drivers are still taxed at entry-exit toll points.

Over the course of an hour, the candidates also debated their positions on education, housing prices, shortage of jobs and employees, transgender athletes, and medical coverage costs, among other topics. Across these subjects, sparring between Lamont and Stefanowski persisted, while Hotaling offered alternatives to the two candidates. Dominating 55% of votes in recent polls, Lamont streaks ahead of Stefanowski’s 40%. Hotaling straggles behind the two. Many critics have stated that Hotaling did not take full advantage of his only debate invitation, considering he is a minor-party candidate with no elective experience or financial backing. The next gubernatorial debate will be on Thursday, October 27, at Fairfield University’s Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts.

**Calvin Moon** may be reached at [cmoon24@choate.edu](mailto:cmoon24@choate.edu)

## Community Calendar

### Trail of Terror

FRIDAY 7-11PM,  
SAT 7-11PM,  
SUN 7-10PM FOR THE  
ENTIRETY OF OCTOBER  
*@ 60 N. Plains Highway,  
Wallingford CT*

### Wallingford Public Library- Collaboratory 5+1 Anniversary Event

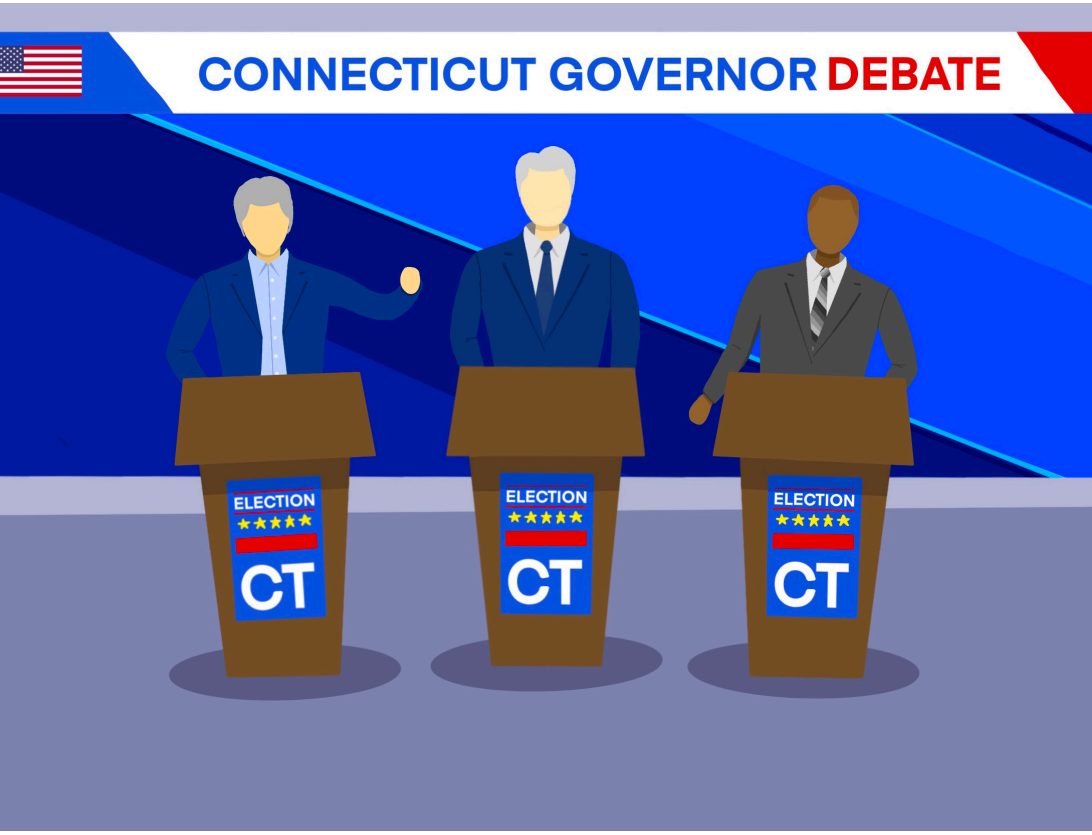
SATURDAY, OCTOBER  
15TH 2022 10AM -  
*@ Wallingford Public  
Library, 200 N Main St,  
Wallingford, CT 06492*

### Ocean Farming in Connecticut: The Emerging Blue Economy

MONDAY, OCTOBER  
24TH 2022 7 - 8:45PM  
*@ Wallingford Public  
Library Community  
Room or Zoom:  
821 3490 0096*

### Game Develop with Jes Negrón of RETCON Games

TUESDAY, OCTOBER  
25TH 2022 7 - 8PM  
*@ Wallingford Public  
Library Community  
Room or Zoom:  
899 3595 9864*



Graphic by Brian Yip '24/The Choate News

Graphic by Yujin Kim '23/The Choate News



THE CHOATE NEWS



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Aubrie Williams '24

Olympia Wolff '25  
Teniola Obayomi '25  
Eva Swanson '25  
Analy Vega '25



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THE PRIVILEGES DAY STUDENTS DESERVE

By **Teniola Obayomi '24**

Opinions Staff Writer

Every morning at 7:22 a.m., I climb into the car and head to school. The 30-minute commute has several downsides, but none more stressful than being late to class.

The late policy should not be the same for both day students and boarding students. A day student is less in control of their punctuality than a boarder, usually relying on others to get to school. Unpredictable weather and traffic are the most frequent, yet few teachers seem to take this into consideration.

In the past, I have been marked late for arriving three or four minutes past the start of class, which I find rather unfair. With all this in mind, I think day students should be granted more flexibility regarding lateness. I propose that day students should receive an extra 10 minutes to get to class. Therefore, if issues with commuting arise, day students will not have to worry about being marked late.

If it's noticed that students are regularly using the 10 minute grace

period, say, more than twice in a given week without a plausible reason, the student will have to meet with their adviser to figure out a solution. In order for students to arrive more than 10 minutes late, and not receive an absence, they would have to send evidence — for example, of the traffic in front of their car — that they are experiencing uncontrollable difficulties during their commute.

Additionally, if students arrive more than 20 minutes late due to commuting problems, their absence should be excused. However, recognizing that this creates the potential for these privileges to easily be abused, there will be parameters set up to ensure that students aren't using these privileges as an excuse to be late to their first period classes.

While arriving late to school is a common struggle among day students, submitting work on time is typically just as difficult. I spend one hour on the road every day. On days when I take the train home, the travel time extends to almost two and a half hours. Understandably, many teachers do not recognize the physical toll of commuting



Graphic by Melody Qian '24 / The Choate News

and assign work that day students might not have time to complete.

I think the School should grant day students more leniency when it comes to submitting assignments. A special "day student extension" could manifest in various ways. An extension for a homework assignment could be two hours longer and an extension on a project could be a day later.

At non-boarding schools, every student commutes to school every morning and their schedule functions normally. What makes the commute to Choate different,

though, is that the systems that dominate the School were made, almost exclusively, with borders in mind. Simply put, Choate is not a place optimally designed for those who do not live on campus. Teachers should take into consideration the day student perspective in creating assignments and due dates, and be more understanding of their commuting students.

**Teniola Obayomi** is a fourth-former from Milford, CT. She may be reached at [tobayomi25@choate.edu](mailto:tobayomi25@choate.edu)

THE ETHICS OF THRIFT SHOPPING



Photos courtesy of Ximena Castillo Nuñez '24

By **Helen Ryan '24**

Opinions Staff Writer

Thrift shopping is not a new concept. Thrift stores first appeared in the 1950s. Thrifting makes essential goods like clothing, cookware, and furniture affordable and accessible to those who cannot consistently afford commercial retail prices. Through social media and popular culture, thrifting has been redefined for our generation as a fun activity used to enhance one's style and express one's individuality.

There are many justifiable reasons behind why people thrift. They may not be able to afford overpriced clothes and merchandise from commercial retailers, or they may not want to contribute to the large carbon footprint produced by the fashion industry; however, recently, people who have the means to purchase clothes from major retailers have begun shopping at stores like Goodwill, taking away necessary resources from those who rely on them.

What is a means of survival for a significant portion of the United States has been commodified as a trend for privileged individuals; it has become an "aesthetic" of sorts and a harmful one at that. There are stores created solely for this type of thrifting that curate collections of secondhand clothing in exchange for a variable upcharge. Vintage stores are also available for those looking to buy clothes that are unique. Stores like these include the popular Buffalo Exchange, L Train Vintage, and Brooklyn Brickhouse Vintage in New York City.

Nevertheless, when looking to go thrift shopping for leisure, it's an individual's responsibility to know the intended audience of the store, to take a

moment to honestly consider what their motivations are in shopping there, and educate themselves on the possible implications of their actions.

A common motivator to go thrifting is wanting to reduce one's carbon footprint through shopping secondhand. One of the biggest contributors to climate change is the fashion industry, which "accounts for a fifth of the 300 million tons of plastic produced each year globally," according to the media company, Bloomberg.

Buying second-hand prevents one from adding to the carbon footprint created by the consumption of clothing from commercial brands. Efforts cannot stop at just buying secondhand: people genuinely interested in environmental preservation should also donate the clothes that they no longer wear as opposed to throwing them out or leaving them in the back of their closet. Especially in a time when trend cycles are so sporadic and temporary, it's important to donate the clothes you no longer wear, regardless of how long you've had them or where they're from.

Buying second-hand, especially for environmental purposes, doesn't mean you have to buy from thrift stores like Goodwill. Instead, you can buy from sustainable fashion brands. Good On You is a site that will allow you to research and find brands that suit you but are within your price point, and sustainably made. This way, you can limit your negative impact on the environment without depriving others of necessary items.

As the trend of thrifting grows, thrift stores begin to run low on stock, making it harder for people to find the clothes they need. With a huge demand for clothes, and people willing

to pay higher prices because they do not shop at second-hand stores based on financial necessity, the prices of items can get much higher, making it even more difficult for those who need it most to purchase clothes and other goods.

Oftentimes, privileged individuals will purchase clothes from thrift stores that do not even fit them, with the intentions of altering them, wearing them with a belt, or, in the most trendy fashion, tying them in the back with a shoelace. What's even harder than finding clothes at a good price point, is finding plus-sized, or larger sized clothes at a reasonable price point. When individuals selfishly make these choices, they take away the few items that exist from a community that is historically marginalized in fashion.

Another contributor to the price spikes are the people who go to thrift stores to buy clothing in bulk and resell online for a profit. Reselling apps like Depop, Poshmark, and Vinted are online thrift stores that can be sorted through with keywords and hashtags. Often, the sellers on these apps inflate the prices significantly and, therefore, are exclusive. Clothes that once could have been of help to a family in need now become a source of profit for someone who can afford to shop at other stores.

Shopping at thrift stores just for fun is an immense privilege that many people fail to recognize. Not only is it a privilege, but it is objectively unethical. Thrift shopping is an important and essential option for many, but the new trend of thrifting for reasons other than necessity is severely problematic.

**Helen Ryan** is a fifth-former from New York, NY. She may be reached at [hryan24@choate.edu](mailto:hryan24@choate.edu)

A Week in the Wild: A One Time Experience

By **Olivia Du '24** and **Virginia Nelson '25**

Opinions Writers

In June of 2022, Olivia Du '24 and Virginia Nelson '25 participated in Choate's inaugural camping trip in collaboration with National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) to Wyoming's Wind River Mountains.

OLIVIA: On my first camping trip, an 11-day backpacking expedition through the Wind River range, we trekked 52 miles, hauled 50 pound backpacks, and waded through icy currents. We navigated our way through snow-covered trails, relieved bodily waste in Nature's bathroom, and regularly waited for the water to boil over the campfire, shivering and hungry. It's something I'll never do again, but it was a great once-in-a-lifetime experience — the kind of thing I think everyone should try at least once.

Our Initial Impressions

VIRGINIA: Two weeks. 10 people. The Wyoming Mountains. This is what I signed up for. There were nine classmates on the trip that I didn't know. What if we all hated each other? I didn't know Dr. Miriam Cohen and Mr. Jeremy Oliver, our chaperones, well at all. I had no idea how to pitch a tent, and I knew I wasn't going to have my phone. I thought I was screwed. As I hopped on a bus at 4 a.m. to go to the airport, I felt extremely underprepared for what was to come.

OLIVIA: At first, my biggest concern was not having any kind of electronic device. What would we do in an emergency? However, the device-related worries quickly dissipated when we were presented with more pressing issues. Think "poop shovels" and "pee rags." Also, it takes me a while to warm

up to people, so, because I knew no one on the trip, I expected the first couple of days to be horrible.

Becoming One with Nature

OLIVIA: We followed a gruesome routine that started at 6 or 7 a.m. each morning. Multiple miles were covered everyday, trying to reach the "X's" on our map that were the campgrounds for each night. Student leaders of the day would lead their small groups of three or four, checking maps (or the GPS) and stopping for snack breaks. When we arrived at our campsite each night, some went to set up tents (a pain to do in the snow) and others cooked.

Enjoying the Little Things

VIRGINIA: After a long day of hiking, all you want to do is hang out with the people you are with. I think that was my favorite part of the trip. It was the time when we all got together to relax and talk about our day. Through laughter, and sometimes even tears, we formed unique friendships with each other.

OLIVIA: I'm sure many of the students on the trip could agree that "Day O" was the best. We did not move camp, allowing a group of interested students to climb a summit while the rest of us slept in. That morning, I remember waking up at 11 a.m. and deciding to make cinnamon rolls in the wilderness.

The Best Moments

VIRGINIA: One of the times we laughed the most was when we had something called a "vegetable off" to choose the ultimate winner for a game. The goal of the game is to see who can do the best impression of a vegetable. Dr. Cohen and Case Sakamoto '23 were tasked with acting like radishes; Case just squatted to the ground, screaming as he went down, but Dr. Cohen

made a more radish-like formation, squatting with her hand in the air. Dr. Cohen won.

Besides the people, the NOLS trip was so special because of the spectacular views. The peaks were unlike any other. We would climb up a little, look to the side, and be greeted with some of the most beautiful sights in the country. One of the prettiest was during a river crossing. The sun glistened over this great lake covered in rocks. On one side there was a mountain peak filled with snow, stuck in the clouds, and on the other side, you could see the entire mountain range. Mountains upon mountains, each bigger than the next.

Our Takeaways

OLIVIA: I am really proud of how open I became towards the end of the trip. I never would have imagined spending eleven days with strangers, much less an entire day without my phone. Actually, when I first got it back, the screen felt so foreign and strange to the touch of my dried and sunburnt fingers. As it turns out, trying to survive in the wild is the best way to bond with random classmates.

VIRGINIA: There were an exorbitant amount of struggles (such as frostbite), but I found it to be one of my most rewarding experiences. Our NOLS group chat is still constantly popping with people asking for a reunion, and the bonds I have with the people I went with are unlike any I've had before. Everyone needs an experience like this in their life.

**Olivia Du** is a fifth-former from Southborough, MA and **Virginia Nelson** is a fourth-former from Baton Rouge, LA. They may be reached at [odu24@choate.edu](mailto:odu24@choate.edu) and [vnelson25@choate.edu](mailto:vnelson25@choate.edu) respectively.



Photo By Alex Hong '24/The Choate News

Olivia Du '24, Virginia Nelson '25, Ava Dant '23, and Rafa Cavalcanti '24 set up camp for the night.



# THE DANGEROUS EFFECT OF LEGAULT’S NATIONALISM

By **Stan Cho ’25**  
*Copy Editor*

The re-election of Premier François Legault in Canada highlights the growing desire for nationalism amongst voters in Quebec. Legault has taken a nationalist stance on behalf of the French-speaking Québécois majority, a population that has felt economically and politically oppressed by an English-speaking minority. Though Legault started as a member of the Parti Québécois, a social democratic political party that seeks Quebec’s secession from Canada, he eventually founded his own party, the Coalition Avenir Québec, to perpetuate an identity-based nationalist agenda and pro-business policies. Legault’s nationalism aims to emphasize the traditional French influence in Quebec through a mandated set of policies regarding language, religion, and culture. For instance, Legault has adjusted Quebec’s immigration policy in order to limit foreign influence on Quebec. Though immigration is not a significant political issue in the rest of Canada, the influx of immigrants arriving in Quebec has slowly chipped away at the homogeneity of French culture in Quebec, specifically on the French Québécois’s linguistic and Roman Catholic heritage. Legault took a notably aggressive stance during his campaign,

asserting that immigration was “suicidal” for Quebec’s French identity due to the naturally violent and extremist nature of immigrants. As a result, Legault and his followers continue to push for the autonomous representation of the French Québécois with the purpose of re-establishing the homogenous identity of Quebec’s French culture and traditions. Legault denies claims about underlying racism in his policies. The concept of nationalism has traditionally referred to the celebration of the traits that define a particular nation. Nationalism encourages residents of a particular nation to ensure that the state acts in accordance with its core beliefs. It should be noted that nationalism is very distinct from national pride and patriotism. For instance, Legault’s nationalism calls for the conservation of French cultures in Quebec by rejecting foreign ethnicities, religions, and traditions. Legault believes that actions such as serving the French Québécois majority or maintaining the historical significance of French traditions are in the best interest of Quebec. All nations and their residents have different qualities such as language, ethnicities, cultures, or religious beliefs; as such, all nations have their own distinct sense of nationalism because they each celebrate different things. For instance, modern American nationalism clashes with Legault’s

nationalism. The United States of America is one of the most politically, ethnically, economically, and religiously diverse nations in the world. Thus, the nation does not have distinct qualities that its people can celebrate. Instead, many American nationalists celebrate the supposed superiority of core American beliefs, such as democracy. In other words, American nationalism

is grounded in America’s founding principles such as natural law, liberty and freedom, limited government presence, democratic sovereignty, and foreign acceptance. Differences in nationalism lead to different methods of conserving and celebrating the traits of a nation. On one hand, Legault exhibits nationalism by restricting foreign influence to prevent the disfigure-

ment of traditional French beliefs. On the other hand, the United States demonstrates nationalism by celebrating diversity, founding new policies to help represent its diverse group of citizens, and offering the willingness to address the sins of our predecessors. Despite these differences, both American and Canadian nationalism are valid forms of the

phenomena. In a nation without nationalists, the people who celebrate the unique qualities of race, ethnicity, religion, and core beliefs risk losing authoritative direction, which could lead to the nation’s downfall.

**Stan Cho** is a fourth-former from Busan, South Korea. He may be reached at [scho25@choate.edu](mailto:scho25@choate.edu)



Premier Legault answers questions from reporters in Quebec City ahead of a party caucus meeting.

Photo courtesy of Macleans.ca

# THE FLAW IN BIDEN’S STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PLAN



President Biden hosts press conference on student loan forgiveness plan.

Photo courtesy of the Wall Street Journal

By **Xiu Lim ’25**  
*Opinions Writer*

On August 24, 2022, President Biden announced a student loan forgiveness plan, in which eligible Americans could have up to \$20,000 in federal student loan debt forgiven. Those who have received the Pell Grant — a financial aid program issued by the federal government — would have the \$20,000 of student loans canceled, while individuals whose annual income is less than \$125,000 would have \$10,000 in student loans canceled. President Biden stated that the mission of the plan is to provide relief to middle-class loan borrowers, especially those who took out loans, but dropped out of school prior to receiving a degree. The intention of this mission is admirable, considering that the cost of attending a public college has risen 80% over the past two decades. As such, there will inevitably be millions of students who simply can’t afford higher-level education. However, the current plan promotes the wrong incentives. This policy sets a precedent of cancelling student loan debt, and whether it happens again in the near future or not, prospective students will take out loans in anticipation

of future cancellations which may not come. In order to understand the cause of these misplaced incentives, we must first ask the question — who is funding this project? Expectedly, the answer is taxpayers. According to the Congressional Budget Office, they will end up paying an estimated \$400 billion. The taxpayers who fund this ambitious project would want the investment they made towards the lives of today’s young Americans to pay off in the future; taxpayers’s hope is that young Americans settle into community-supporting professions after completing their degrees in college. However, the government doesn’t incentivize this. In a Brookings report by Adam Looney, a Senior Fellow at the institute, the following are the four least subsidized degrees: BA’s in mechanical, civil, electrical, and chemical engineering. The four most subsidized degrees are certificates in cosmetology, allied health medical assistant services, dental support services, and AA’s in health and medical administrative services. This disparity means that borrowers have a greater incentive to take out loans to pursue a certificate in cosmetology than to pursue a degree

in civil engineering since the percentage of debt forgiven for the cosmetology certificate is 100% while the percentage of debt forgiven for civil engineering is only 1%. Of course, the services that cosmetologists provide are important to the lives of millions; however, their contributions to the nation’s economy aren’t nearly as large as those of chemical engineers, and taxpayers would likely want their dollars to be invested in the degrees for jobs that would give the highest return on investment. There are two potential solutions to this unintentional misalignment of incentives. The first is to selectively offer student loan relief to the majors that contribute the most to society after graduation. Alternatively, the administration could focus its efforts on solving the root cause of rising costs in attending a four-year public or even private college by placing a cap on tuition, though either will be met with severe pushback. Either way, President Biden’s vision for an America with more affordable education cannot be effectively realized by setting a precedent for student loan forgiveness. **Xiu Lim** is a fourth-former from Singapore, Singapore. He may be reached at [xlim25@choate.edu](mailto:xlim25@choate.edu)

# Prime Minister Truss Does Not Have Britain’s Best Interest in Mind

By **Eva Swanson ’25**  
*Opinions Writer*

On September 6, Conservative Party member Liz Truss became the third female Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. During her first month on the job, UK markets lost an estimated value of \$500 billion. But it doesn’t end there. There’s reason to believe that the flubs of the Truss administration will continue to worsen the British political and economic climate and further divide an already troubled nation. Similar to the United States, two primary parties share the majority of parliamentary seats—the Conservative Party and the Labour Party. After former Prime Minister Boris Johnson stepped down, Truss faced Rishi Sunak, a former chancellor and fellow member of the Conservative Party, in gaining the premiership. Voted in by fellow party members, Truss won by 21,000 votes, approximately a third more than her competitor. Truss, a former leader of Oxford University’s Liberal Democrat society, has shed her past affiliation with the Labour Party. As the leader of the Tories, Truss has taken a conser-

vative stance on many issues, causing a downturn in the United Kingdom’s economy. The \$500 billion loss in UK markets and the pound’s fall to a new all-time low stem from her unsuccessful new measures. Amidst high inflation rates, Truss implemented a tax reform plan increasing mortgage rates, mainly benefiting the rich. Soon after, Truss released a new plan to eliminate the highest tax bracket, meaning 31 million of the UK’s highest earners would pay considerably less to the government. Arguing that cutting taxes will spur business growth, innovation, and more, Truss has remained adamant that her measures would eventually work. However, Deputy First Minister John Swinney and Finance Ministers from Wales and Northern Ireland have dubbed the plan “a huge gamble for the UK economy.” Though Truss failed to pass her policy, since the announcement of these measures, investors have ditched government bonds, leading to a collapse in the pound. Worth about 1.04 American dollars a couple of weeks ago, the pound sterling lost 5% of its value in just a few

days. This spiral led to an intervention by the Bank of England, hoping to decrease “dysfunction” and “restore market functioning.” This trend is likely to continue. Liz Truss seems to be channeling the policies of Margaret Thatcher, the first female Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. For the vast majority of her term, Thatcher was loved by the public; it was only at the end of her tenure that people felt otherwise; however, Truss falls short of the economic gains Thatcher capitalized on. Since the beginning of Truss’s term, it has been clear that she has failed to support the British people. Through her attempts to pass a meaningful proposal, Liz Truss has undermined her legitimacy and authority in the eyes of the British public — as well as in the eyes of far too many economists. In the years to come, though, I hope she improves for the sake of my country. I fear that her leadership will only drive Britain further into financial ruin. **Eva Swanson** is a fourth-former from New Haven, CT. She may be reached at [eswanson25@choate.edu](mailto:eswanson25@choate.edu)



Prime Minister Liz Truss delivers speech at Conservative Party Conference.

Photo courtesy of CNN



## A GUIDE TO DIY IN THE DINING HALL



Graphic by Melody Qian '24/The Choate News

By **Henry Gillibrand '26** and **Zooey Schamis '26**  
Reporters

### Hack #1: Poke Bowl

Anissa Wang '24's favorite dining hall hack is to create a DIY poke bowl with rice from the international station. Poke bowl is a Hawaiian-style dish consisting of jasmine rice, diced fish or other proteins, vegetables, and seasonings. Many of those ingredients can be found in the dining hall salad bar — cucumber, chicken, tofu, and avocado — dressed with soy sauce, sriracha, or mayo from the sauce station to create the perfect poke bowl.

### Hack #2: Green Tea Soda

Taking full advantage of the soda dispensers, Wendy Huo '23 uses the different fizzy flavors to concoct her favorite drink: green tea soda. She arrived at the perfect formula of one part green tea and one part soda water plus some ice. "I like

to mix things up," she said. Trying out a myriad of "cocktails" allowed Huo to discover this ginger-ale-like beverage, which she used to enjoy every day last spring. For a healthier option, she recommends a cool glass of H<sub>2</sub>O. "I got all my friends into drinking it," Huo said.

### Hack #3: Toast

The toasters and selection of bread at the dining hall provide students with many opportunities to create flavorful combinations. Honey banana toast, made by topping wheat or white toast with sliced bananas and a generous drizzle of honey, is a simple and delicious recipe. If one would like a savory choice instead, Emma Ding '24 recommends a DIY avocado toast. After running the bread through the toaster twice "to make sure it's crunchy and warm," Ding tops it with avocados from the salad bar, smushed with a fork and drizzled with lemons from the

tea station. "Lastly, a touch of salt and pepper would make it perfect," said Ding.

### Hack #4: Panini

Yuki Zhang '24 became a patron of the panini press after trying it once at lunch. Taking two pieces of ciabatta bread, Zhang puts in her favorite items from the salad bar — salami, cheese, tomato, and lettuce — then places the panini in the machine, while "pressing it down hard," she emphasized. She learned this trick from a friend, and despite only having tried it once, she has already recommended it to dozens more. "It's very consistent because you can make it every day," Zhang explained. On days with too long of a lunch line, this hack provides a quick solution with balanced nutrition.

### Tip #1: Get Desserts First

Clara Kang '26 believes the best dining hall strategy is to get the dessert before the main

meal. The lines peak during lunchtime and can stretch all the way back to the salad bar; however, if one heads to the dessert station first, they can enjoy the sweet appetizer while others wait in line. If the timing works out, they might dodge the pizza line monstrosity when they are ready for their main course.

### Tip #2: Handle Glassware Carefully

"Don't pour a cold drink into a hot glass" is the best advice from Henry Ding '24. Making iced lemonade at the dining hall has taught Ding a safety lesson to remember. Next time you try to make your own green tea soda, make sure that the glass has not been freshly placed onto the rack and is still warm.

**Henry Gillibrand and Zooey Schamis** may be reached at [hgillibrand26@choate.edu](mailto:hgillibrand26@choate.edu) and [zschamis26@choate.edu](mailto:zschamis26@choate.edu)

## THE LIBRARY'S TREASURE TROVE OF RESOURCES

By **Anya Shah '25**  
Reporter

Whether you're printing posters to decorate your dorm room, seeking out resources for your next big history essay, or looking for math help on a Monday night, the Andrew Mellon Library is there to help you out. Open seven days a week, it is home to both our wonderful librarian team and countless on-line and in-person resources.

The Math and Writing Centers, open from Sunday through Thursday, offer peer tutoring to students across all forms and with all levels of experience. These programs seek to assist students with HPRSS-related and math-related homework from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. on school nights in the Reference Room. To better accommodate day students, peer tutors are also available on Zoom.

The *Ask a Librarian* program also offers face-to-face guidance to all Choate students. It serves as a point of contact between students and the librarians, who are almost always available to answer questions. "Even if we don't know the answer, we're going to help you find it ... whether that's something as straightforward as research and citations, or I need to find *this* building on campus, or who on campus does *this*," explained Ms. Courtney Jaser, a librarian who specializes in instruction and digital services.

The library's digital resources are easily accessible through the Choate website. Newspaper subscriptions to publications such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* are available to all Choate community members for free in addition to 50 on-line databases, several e-books, and a collection of audiobooks. *Kanopy*, an online streaming platform, also provides students with access to popular movies and documentaries.

Inevitably, almost every Choate student has misplaced some

class supplies during their time. Fortunately, the library offers a solution: loaning of equipment such as Apple Pencils, calculators, cameras, headphones, speakers, and microphones. All the students need to do is to check the equipment out from a librarian at the *Ask Us* desk, and it's that easy!

Within the library is a treasure trove of in-person resources as well. From the archives to the podcasting studio, basement study rooms, or monthly book displays, there is a seemingly infinite number of resources to be explored by students.

Ms. Emily Yates is a new librarian who works on displays and installments. "We usually do two special displays a month, and they are always rotating," she said. "Right now, we have Hispanic and Latin Heritage Month and LGBTQIA+ History Month." Every month, the library features special displays that highlight specific groups, holidays, or celebrations. This is an ideal resource for students looking to explore or connect with experiences and cultures that may be different from their own.

Despite the Andrew Mellon Library's impressive number of resources and information, the staff is always looking to expand. Book and equipment requests are highly encouraged, and the library is open to working more closely with student clubs and organizations. "We just want clubs to know that we're available for that and open to collaboration," said Ms. Jaser. There are countless opportunities to take advantage of within the library, and all community members are urged to explore them.

To reach a librarian, email [askalibrarian@choate.edu](mailto:askalibrarian@choate.edu), join the *Ask a Librarian* Zoom room, or just show up to the desks in the back of the library.

**Anya Shah** may be reached at [ashah25@choate.edu](mailto:ashah25@choate.edu)

## Choate Welcomes New Community Safety Officers



Photo by Toffy Prakittipoom '24/The Choate News

Mr. Emmett Brayton appreciates the community dynamic at Choate.

By **Jacqueline Yan '24**  
Copy Editor

### Mr. Emmett Brayton

Mr. Emmett Brayton, a Connecticut local from nearby Middlefield, is one of the newest additions to Choate's Community Safety team. Although Mr. Brayton has only been working here for a few months, he has come to really love and appreciate the campus community. "There is a lot of diversity, a lot of extracurriculars, a lot of community involvement and I think that's very important to me," he shared. "It gives me a sense of responsibility to work on this campus, and I'm really thankful for the great community of people."

As a big sports fan and active gym rat, Mr. Brayton loves

to stop by athletic games during his shifts to cheer on Choate's sports teams. He said, "I see people playing basketball, lifting. I see people wave, smile, and say 'Hi.' I enjoy looking at the trophies as I walk down the hallway. There's always something going on in there." Thus, foot patrolling down the halls of the Worthington Johnson Athletic Center (WJAC) is naturally one of his favorite activities.

At the same time, the freedom, flexibility, and responsibility of being a Community Safety officer also make his job so special. "It's great. There are a lot of responsibilities, but there's also a lot of independence. There's a lot of time when you are able to organize your schedule, prepare, and do

things the way you want," Mr. Brayton said. "Free food at the dining hall is a plus, too."

Most importantly, however, Mr. Brayton loves being able to interact with Choate students. "I just enjoy walking around and seeing all the kids playing sports or eating in the dining hall," he shared. "I'm starting to know some of them on a first-name basis. The hockey guys, for example, need me to unlock their locker room all the time. They're nice to me."

### Mr. Tremayne Kassim

As a former Kent School Community Safety team member, Mr. Tremayne Kassim has been working in the security field for around five years now. Despite having been at Choate



Photo by Toffy Prakittipoom '24/The Choate News

Mr. Tremayne Kassim makes his daily rounds.

for a mere three weeks, his familiarity with boarding schools has made him a friendly and welcoming presence on campus.

Mr. Kassim first decided to work in security as a way to pass the time while pursuing his studies. For the past two years, he has been majoring in computer information systems and minoring in cybersecurity at Post University in nearby Waterbury. With an interest in computing since a young age, Mr. Kassim is most captivated by the constant evolution of technology.

"I feel like with computers there's always something to learn. Technology is always evolving and it's that feeling of always having something to learn," he said. After completing his studies, he plans to pursue a path in cybersecurity.

Mr. Kassim's favorite patrolling spot on campus is the Student Activities Center (SAC) because of its resemblance to a college town. "St. John itself is a very comfortable place," he explained. "When you go in there, it's like a little college town with the faculty lunch areas and everything. It's just such a nice place to be."

While working hard to keep the campus safe, Mr. Kassim has also been able to make many friends on campus. "It's a lot of fun. Working with my co-workers, trying to make up stories, playing games like 'Which Starburst is the best Starburst? The yellow or the pink?' It's all fun and games," he said.

Like Mr. Brayton, he is most enthusiastic about the oppor-

tunities for student interaction that his position as a Community Safety officer provides. "I feel like all the students come from a different walk of life, and I like to learn where they come from and who they are," he said.

Our Community Safety officers play an integral role in ensuring the safety and security of our campus and community. The next time you're crossing the sidewalk, simply strolling by, or in dire need of assistance when a building is locked, be sure to wave and say "hi" to our lovely guardian angels. You will definitely spot them sporting their bright yellow vests!

**Jacqueline Yan** may be reached at [jjyan24@choate.edu](mailto:jjyan24@choate.edu)



# PAUL BOZZI: THE MAN BEHIND THE BOOTH

By **Lauren Hsu '24**  
*Staff Reporter*

Can you imagine School Meetings where a microphone-less speaker has to shout into the audience? Thanks to the work of Mr. Paul Bozzi, a sound technician and Assistant Technical Director in the Arts Department, the School is able to put together productions and events with elaborate sound technology. Mr. Bozzi came to Choate in 2013 after 10 years of working at the Yale Repertory Theater, where he served as the Head Audio Engineer. He built large, sophisticated, “Broadway-level” theatrical sound systems while guiding a group of nine students throughout the process. A friend recommended Choate to Mr. Bozzi, landing him his current position. School events and theater productions make up the majority of Mr. Bozzi’s work. For any gathering in Colony Hall or the Paul Mellon Arts Center (PMAC), such as School Meetings and Community Conversations, Mr. Bozzi handles the media, microphones, slide-shows, and videos. The second part of Mr. Bozzi’s job is doing sound design for theater, which entails choosing microphone types and controlling sound effects. He also assists in set and lighting construction.

Mr. Bozzi trains four to five students every year in sound, instructing them how to operate the board and perform proper microphone placement. “He teaches students how to do that work, and really empowers those few students,” said Theater Director Mrs. Kate Doak. Mr. Bozzi hopes to give the technical theater students a more holistic experience in theater, saying, “We want to make it a real established thing that the sound kids are part of the entire rehearsal process from day one, so they are almost like a cast member.” Mr. Bozzi’s career as a sound technician began with playing-drums at only 12 years old, and he still practices every night on campus. “I heard Jimi Hendrix on the radio when I was 14 and decided it was the best thing in the world,” said Mr. Bozzi. He is the founder, leader, and drummer of Moto, a group of five to six players that performs mostly Caribbean music, including reggae and soca. Moto performs 12 times during summer concerts by the water in Connecticut. As a member of a small rock band, Mr. Bozzi said that “somebody has to learn to do the audio,” which paved the way for his profession. Reflecting on Mr. Bozzi’s many contributions to the Choate community, Mrs. Doak said, “He brings a really healthy love of music and performance and

sound to his role at the school and to the program for all of us.” Qin Caldwell ’24, who works with Mr. Bozzi in the booth during School Meetings and events, described him as “just a really nice guy.” For Caldwell, working with Mr. Bozzi is “always fun and light-hearted. [Mr. Bozzi] often will whistle a tune while walking and is generally cheerful.” After 10 years of hard work at Choate, Mr. Bozzi plans to retire at the end of this year but will continue playing with Moto and doing freelance audio work. He will also continue engaging in his other interests, which include swimming, going to the beach, and riding mountain bikes at night. At home, he grows vegetables. “I like to eat what I grow ... mostly tomatoes and basil and swiss chard and cucumbers and oregano and stuff like that,” said Mr. Bozzi. He also takes care of his two young granddaughters, whom he described as “amazing kids.” Mr. Bozzi has enjoyed working in the realm of academia. He shared his thoughts on his time at Choate, saying, “A lot of people you meet in this world [academia] are mostly really educated, nice people. I really appreciate working at Choate and Yale...these two places have been really special, so it’s a good way to go out.”

**Lauren Hsu** may be reached at [lhsu24@choate.edu](mailto:lhsu24@choate.edu)



Mr. Paul Bozzi runs the booth for School Meetings in Colony Hall.

# EXPOSING SEAMS

By **Ximena Castillo Núñez '24**  
*Columnist*

I think too much about clothes. I question why we wear them and what we consider clothing, as opposed to undergarments. I notice what people are wearing, and my favorite thing to know is what someone’s favorite piece in their closet is. I wonder about clothing in painting, sculpture, and film. I do not shut up about how well-dressed people in Amsterdam are, and how much I like my friends’ style in Mexico City. I think about what to wear and what it says about me. I am in constant battle with the preppy. I force my dad to watch fashion shows with me and try to explain to him why something “ugly” is cool (the latter happens nearly daily, to anyone). I ask myself, “Where does style come from? What makes a piece cool?” And most recently, “Why should you care what I have to say about fashion?” In reality, you shouldn’t. I am not a prophet of the fashion gods — just a big fan. I am, however, hoping to start a conversation about fashion. There are necessary dialogues to be had surrounding Choate’s culture around clothing relating to self-expression and as a manifestation of the School’s economic landscape. I want to talk about our relationship with clothing from an artistic and social perspective in an effort to democratize fashion at Choate. Give me the benefit of the doubt and feel free to disagree. Why “Exposing Seams” though? Let me explain. The title of my column references the work of the one and only Martin Margiela, a household name in fashion history. He is a Belgian anti-fashion designer who created Maison Martin Margiela in 1989 and is someone whom I deeply admire. Through his body of work and house codes, he revolutionized fashion as an art form and left a lasting impact on how we understand the meaning of clothing. His collections featured clothing that evidenced the process of making it, referenced historic elements and memories, told stories, and had a deconstructive aesthetic. Margiela also literally revealed the seams in his clothing: something I can only hope to do metaphorically. “Exposing Seams” is a nod to Margiela’s philosophy and my attempt to reveal the inner workings of the fashion world: the people, the impact on the environment, and the meaning that hides behind the seams. I am thrilled to have an outlet for productive brain dumps and to fully nerd out on fashion. In honor of the first article in my column, I invite you to wear something weird. Have fun! Peace out.

**Ximena Castillo Núñez** may be reached at [xcastillonunez24@choate.edu](mailto:xcastillonunez24@choate.edu)



# MUSIC FROM THE SOLE TAPS INTO THE PMAC

By **Analy Vega '25**  
*Staff Reporter*

As the lights dimmed in the Paul Mellon Arts Center (PMAC) at 7:30 p.m. on October 7 and 8, dancers and musicians filed into the auditorium from the side door. Holding cowbells and drums of all sizes, company members of Music from the Sole energetically danced and sang their way onto the stage while audience members watched with great anticipation. Led by dancer Mr. Leonardo Sandoval and musician Mr. Gregory Richardson, Music from the Sole is based in New York City and presents original Afro-Brazilian music and dance to a wide range of audiences. At Choate, they performed *I Didn’t Come to Stay*, a work featuring eight dancers and a five-piece band. Incorporating dance forms such as tap, percussive dance, samba, and house into live funk and jazz music, the performance was a joyful presentation of artistic diversity and virtuosity. The performance was well received by the Choate students. Chelsea Branch ’25, who attended the Friday performance, said, “I really liked how the dancers and the musicians were all so in sync. They seemed like they really felt the music and felt the dancing, and I thought that that was very admirable.”

Dance Composition students were required to attend the performance. Dancer and student choreographer Vicky Dzodan ’23 noticed how the artists in *I Didn’t Come to Stay* “copied, contrasted, and complemented” each other — a concept that she learned in Dance Composition class. “Sometimes the music would be complementing the tap dance, while at other times the tap dancing would contrast the silence. And then, other dancers would come in and complement and copy the movements, and it would all come together,” she explained. Just days before the performance, Mr. Sandoval and Mr. Richardson hosted a body percussion masterclass in the Colony Hall Dance Studio for dance and music program students. The session featured call-and-response exercises as well as a

group combination. In the beginning, students stood in a circle and mimicked a rhythmic body percussion pattern performed by Mr. Sandoval. They experimented with dynamics, pitches, and rhythms that they could create by stomping, clapping, or hitting different parts of their bodies. Next, Mr. Sandoval taught a combination that consisted of three rhythmic patterns overlapping with each other. The class was split into three groups, and each group tried each pattern. The class experienced difficulty with staying in time through a tendency to rush, but Mr. Sandoval and Mr. Richardson expertly guided students through the combination by breaking it down. For ballet dancer Leilani Gao ’26, the workshop emphasized the importance of rhythm in dance. “I never really thought that much into the rhythm of dance,” she said. “Being able to see how rhythm is so important in other types of dancing was a different type of thinking.” The rhythmic combination exercised listening skills that are crucial in ensemble playing for Music Arts Concentration student and dancer Aria Ramnath ’24. “I think it

was a good exercise in listening because you had to worry about yourself — make sure you’re doing the choreography correctly — but also make sure that it matches up and is in time with the others,” she said. Ramnath was also intrigued by how the dance and music worlds collided in the masterclass. While musicians typically practice in practice rooms and dancers rehearse in the studio, the masterclass brought the two groups together. “Everyone got out of their element. I think it was interesting to see how people from different disciplines interacted with each other,” she said. “If we have more events like this, it can be a ground for collaboration.” The interdisciplinary nature of the masterclass is reflected in *I Didn’t Come to Stay*, where musicians joined in on the dancing while dancers sang and created their own music through tap dance and body percussion. At the end of the performance, the line between dancers and musicians blurred once again as the artists paraded out of the PMAC, grooving and vocalizing to the beat of the drums.

**Analy Vega** may be reached at [avega25@choate.edu](mailto:avega25@choate.edu)



Photos by Ramsey Scott ’23 and Toffy Prakittiphoom ’24/The Choate News  
(Top) Mr. Leonardo Sandoval gives a demonstration in his masterclass. (Bottom) Music from the Sole performs *I Didn’t Want to Stay* at the PMAC.





## FIELD REPORT

Choate Fall Record  
39 - 17 - 7

### Varsity Games

**Boys' Soccer** (7-1-1)  
vs. Andover, 2-1

**Girls' Soccer** (6-1)  
vs. Lawrenceville, 6-0

**Girls' Volleyball** (7-2)  
vs. Andover, 1-3

**Boys' Football** (3-0)  
vs. Avon, 36-35

**Girls' Field Hockey** (2-4)  
vs. Andover, 0-4

**Girls' Cross Country** (1-2)  
vs. Andover, 26-29

**Boys' Cross Country** (0-3)  
vs. Andover, 43-16

**Boys' Water Polo** (6-2)  
vs. Hamden Hall, 8-6

### J.V. Games

**Boys' Soccer** (1-3-1)  
vs. Andover, 0-4

**Girls' Soccer** (2-1-3)  
vs. Andover, 0-0

**Girls' Volleyball** (4-1)  
vs. Andover, 3-0

**Girls' Field Hockey** (1-1-2)  
vs. Andover, 3-4

## BOYS' WATER POLO WELCOMES COACH KATIE CHILDS

By **Yuki Zhang '24** and  
**Michael Xu '25**  
*Reporters*

The Boys' Varsity Water Polo team has gotten off to a tremendous start, with an impressive record of 6-2. This achievement can be credited to both players and the newest member of the team, Coach Katie Childs '95 P '24 '26.

Coach Katie began her water polo career at Choate as a freshman on the Girls' Water Polo team and continued playing at the University of Maryland and internationally as part of the Junior and Senior National Teams. For the past 19 years, Coach Katie has been involved with both the Boys' and Girls' Water Polo teams. This year, she joined the team as the head coach of the boys' team, bringing new perspectives and experiences from her knowledge of the sport and her ability to resonate with the players.

Coach Katie explained how she has been anticipating a chance to return to Choate. "I have been watching the games for the last couple of years with Chris as a freshman and sophomore [son Chris Childs '24 and a lead scorer on the team]." Coach Katie continued, stating that she "knew that there was an opening to coach. I had the support of the returning players, having been a bit involved

in the year before, so I did, and I'm happy to be coaching."

Coach Katie is very excited about coaching the team this year. "My favorite part of coaching is the way that the team makes me feel rewarded for doing it. It's very visible on faces and mannerisms and discussions that the group of student-athletes is very excited and happy to have me here, and it makes me feel pretty special."

The team has welcomed Coach Katie, highlighting her coaching style and knowledge of the sport. Captain Sam Anastasio '23 said, "She is a valuable asset and necessary because the last couple years coming off the pandemic has been pretty hard. Katie's been great with being able to develop not just the older more experienced players, and starting 4-0 is pretty amazing."

In addition, Captain Finn Lut-ton '23 points out how Coach Katie's style has shifted their game methodology, "Last year, we were very focused on conditioning. The only way we could potentially beat other teams was just by out-swimming them. This year, Katie's a lot more focused on our technique and our awareness of the pool."

Coach Katie has also brought a strong mindset and a desire to win to the team. "She's a lot more invested in the team ... It really is so evident in games, you know, she gets mad, she gets frustrated, but that just shows the passion," revealed varsity goalie Garrett



Photo by Tiffany Xiao '23/The Choate News

Coach Katie advises Tyler Kwee '24 during a game.

Curtis '24 when reflecting on the recent wins. "She'll give constructive criticism and really help the team by communicating."

A recent win against Hopkins advanced the team, leaving them with a high chance of making New England's. With numerous close games occurring early in the season, the league is quite competitive. Coach Katie recognizes the challenge but has faith in this year's team. "I don't think there's another team out there that can say the same — that they have this

many people contributing on offense and everyone contributing on defense." She emphasized the high number of players scoring goals every game and the cohesion and ability of the players to find each other in the pool. "Starting off 4-0 gives us a much better statistical chance of making it to New England, so we're on the right track, but we've got to keep our head on straight and stay focused on each game ahead."

Following such an impressive start, make sure to be on

the lookout for more victories from the Boys' Water Polo team. Come the spring, Coach Katie hopes to be involved in the Girls' Water Polo team despite being busier during the spring season. With Coach Katie on board, the Choate Water Polo program should anticipate many seasons of success and victories to celebrate.

**Yuki Zhang and Michael Xu** may be reached at [yzhang24@choate.edu](mailto:yzhang24@choate.edu) and [mxu25@choate.edu](mailto:mxu25@choate.edu)

## NEW WAVE OF SCHOOL SPIRIT WASHES OVER SPORTS GAMES

By **Emily Scandrett '26** and  
**Annie Cady '26**  
*Reporters*

Nothing is better than the feeling of people coming together to support our school. Cheers fill the fields' sidelines, and blue and gold flash throughout the crowd as the first home games of the season begin. School spirit fills the air with people cramming into every inch of the stands. Finally, it's here and just in time!

Throughout the past few years, many things have changed in the Choate community. Largely due to Covid-19, sporting events became rare, practices were canceled, and the athletic atmosphere became less intense. As Covid-19 restrictions have finally been lifted, the School is looking to reimplement old traditions and create new ones to uplift the strong school community traditionally centered around our sports teams. There is no doubt that students create the most vibrant community at Choate.

The student-athletes and supporters play a massive role in creating school spirit. Grace Furtado '23, a four-year senior

and Varsity Swim and Water Polo Captain, understood what it was like to form a community where students could collaborate and grow as athletes. "I feel like we really did grow pretty close, and some of my best friends now are underclassmen from swimming."

Covid-19 affected both the practice and competitive sides of teams. However, Furtado found that Covid-19 forced the swim team to come together and bond outside of practices. "I think it was a good way to integrate grades because we were spending so much of our time with each other outside the pool."

Varsity Soccer goalie Brandon Ma '24 came to Choate in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, which negatively affected both his season and perception of the Choate community. "I was a bit discouraged in the beginning because we didn't actually have a season, so I didn't actually know how much school spirit we had." Ma couldn't understand the support of the Choate community until he saw the under-the-lights games during his sophomore season. These traditions are what the student body looks forward to

and is hoping to continue in the upcoming years.

Not only has the student body been working hard to bring the Choate community together, the Athletics Department has also added new programming. Athletics Department Head, Mr. Roney Eford, has added more night home games to the overall sports schedule, such as the recent Girls' Varsity Soccer Game against Westminster. "The ease of Covid-19 restrictions at many schools, including Choate, has helped school spirit overall," said Mr. Eford. He added that, "the simple act of showing up to a game can make the biggest difference."

Student-athletes or not, everyone can support one another at games, whether varsity, JV, or thirds. As a community, the student body can work to make our sports just as spirited and attended as before the pandemic. Choate is moving one step closer to returning to pre-pandemic life.

**Emily Scandrett and Annie Cady** may be reached at [escandrett26@choate.edu](mailto:escandrett26@choate.edu) and [acady26@choate.edu](mailto:acady26@choate.edu)



Photo courtesy of Choate Flickr

Students dress up to show their support at the pink-out on Saturday, October 8.

## Peak Performance: Insight Into Molding Choate's Elite Athletes

By **James Levien '24**  
*Reporter*

Peak Performance training has become vital at Choate for dedicated athletes to reach their full physical potential. Each day begins with stretching on the tarmac before moving into speed training, running form techniques, and competitions to test overall explosiveness.

Monday is dedicated to working on legs and mainly focuses on front squats. Tuesday is committed to building a strong chest with a focus on the bench press. Wednesday is a gap in the week; however, many athletes take the time away from the gym to hone their skills at their captains' practices. Thursday is when the program returns with an emphasis on legs again, but this time, focusing on Zercher squats. Friday is the last day of the week

that the program meets, focusing on shoulder muscles through the military press. Each week concludes with a competition to test the athletes against their peers and to track their progress.

One of these tests is the "Beeper Test" or the "Pacer Test." The test includes setting a distance and making each player skate or run the length in a set amount of time. As the test progresses, the time reduces, making it harder to cut each interval. The challenging competition measures cardiovascular endurance and speed. Daniel Mahoney '23, Captain of Boys' Varsity Hockey and member of the Peak Performance program, elaborated on the test's significance. Mahoney noted that the test built "chemistry" and "comradery" with his teammates. This baseline test is run once in the first week of

the program and once again in the last week of the program. Mahoney is thrilled to see the final results come together and "gain momentum as a team going into the season."

The lessons taught in Peak go far beyond the gym. One of the first lessons taught in Peak is how to maintain a balanced diet. The diet emphasizes the consumption of carbs, proteins, and fats and how to assess portion sizes properly.

For Badeer, the single most important lesson he has learned in the program is the importance of recovery. "From nutrition to sleep, to stretching, rolling out, or even taking cold showers, it's just prioritizing your own body. It's about learning yourself and your personal limits and working to exceed them."

To join the program, athletes at Choate have to complete an application and go through a selection process. Only fifth and sixth-formers who plan to use Peak as preparation for their primary sport are eligible for the program. Coaches communicate which athletes would be a good fit for the program before narrowing it down to the limited number of spots available.

Head Athletic Trainer Mr. Brian Holloway said his biggest hope was that "each athlete leaves the Peak Performance program with a passion for self-improvement and a greater understanding of human performance." Mahoney said Mr. Holloway is "the best in the business with nutrition and training." Mahoney concluded, "He's a huge help to us as athletes and everything we accomplish."

**James Levien** may be reached at [jlevien24@choate.edu](mailto:jlevien24@choate.edu)